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W. J. DALL described *Some Characteristics of the Genus Spirula*.

J. HOWARD GORE read a paper on *The Groningen Land-lease System*, being one of perpetual lease to tenants and heirs. Groningen is one of the most prosperous provinces of the Netherlands.

BERNARD R. GREEN,  
Secretary.

#### MEETING OF THE NEW YORK SECTION OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY.

THE New York Section of the American Chemical Society held its regular meeting at the College of the City of New York on Friday evening, the 7th inst.

The programme announced a paper by Dr. R. G. Eccles on 'New Facts about Calycanthus,' and 'Items of Interest from the Cleveland Meeting,' by Prof. A. A. Breneman.

Dr. Eccles stated that the calycanthus seeds, on which his work had been done, were from Tennessee, where they were considered as being poisonous.

He had separated from them an alkaloid different from and more peculiar than any alkaloids known to chemists.

The seeds contain one-third their weight of a bland, pale yellow fixed oil. This oil is wholly removable by petroleum ether. When freed from oil and placed in water the seeds ferment, and the separated alkaloid gives the following reactions: Green color, by strong nitric acid. Pale canary, by hydrochloric acid. Red, by sulphuric acid and bichromate of potash.

Heated with strong caustic potash, a new alkaloid was developed and a sweetish odor produced.

Dr. H. W. Wiley had also examined the seeds, and had found that the alkaloid produced a fine purple color with cane sugar and sulphuric acid. The seeds themselves contain enough sugar to give this reaction. A single seed beaten up with a few drops of water yields the fine purple color on addition of a drop of sulphuric acid.

Ether alone will only extract a trace of alkaloid from the seeds, but a mixture of ether, alcohol and ammonia gives a complete extraction.

The author had isolated two alkaloids, the

second in smaller quantity, and a third alkaloid has been found by Dr. Wiley.

The calycanthus-alkaloid gives different colored reaction from the salts.

The means of a series of combustions by Dr. W. A. Noyes gave the following result:

Carbon.....	71.56
Nitrogen.....	15.26
Hydrogen.....	8.34
Oxygen.....	4.84
	<hr/>
	100.00

Dr. Noyes believes the formula to be  $C_{17}H_{23}N_3O$ .

Its specific rotary power is exceedingly high, being ten times that of cane sugar.

The sulphate is a white prismatic salt giving yellow oxidation products when heated in a sealed tube with nitric acid.

The author described the various salts which he had prepared, and exhibited the color reactions with both the salts and the alkaloids.

Prof. Breneman's review of the Cleveland meeting had been postponed, owing to the length of programme at the January meeting of the section.

The work of Prof. Maberry on oils, his laboratory and apparatus for conducting the protracted distillations of oils under reduced pressure were briefly described.

Dr. Durand Woodman exhibited a simple lecture table apparatus for experimentally demonstrating the luminosity of the acetylene flame. The meeting was then adjourned until March 6th.

DURAND WOODMAN,  
Secretary.

#### NEW BOOKS.

*Primary Factors of Organic Evolution.* E. D. COPE. Chicago and London, The Open Court Publishing Co. 1896. Pp. xvi+547. \$2.00.

*Greenland Icefields and Life in the North Atlantic.* G. FREDERICK WRIGHT and WARREN UPHAM. New York, D. Appleton & Co. 1896. Pp. xv+407. \$2.00.

*Die Insel Tenerife.* HANS MEYER. Leipzig, G. Mieser. 1896. Pp. viii+328.

*Elements of Botany.* J. Y. BERGEN. Boston and London, Ginn & Co. Pp. viii+57.